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President: Mr. Cujba (Vice-President) (Republic of Moldova)

Contents

Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation

(a) Follow-up to policy recommendations of the General Assembly and the Council

(b) Reports of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Food Programme

Dialogue with the Executive Heads of the United Nations funds and programmes

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In the absence of Mr. Ali (Malaysia), Mr. Cujba (Republic of Moldova), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation

(a) Follow-up to policy recommendations of the General Assembly and the Council (A/64/578-E/2010/3, A/65/79-E/2010/78; E/2010/52, E/2010/53 and E/2010/70)

(b) Reports of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Food Programme (E/2009/35; E/2010/5, E/2010/6, E/2010/14, E/2010/34 (Part I) and Add.1 and E/2010/36; E/2010/L.7)

Dialogue with the Executive Heads of the United Nations funds and programmes

1. **The President** said that in its resolution 64/289 on system-wide coherence, the General Assembly had called for informal discussions among the Executive Boards on cross-cutting issues and for greater informal interaction between the Boards and the Economic and Social Council. The Council was committed to ensuring that those new developments improved the coherence and effectiveness of the United Nations at country level.

2. The dialogue with the executive heads of the funds and programmes would focus on how operational activities for development could help respond to the challenges ahead, including achieving better and faster results through effective partnerships, and efficient and results-oriented operational modalities.

3. He invited Mr. Sha Zukang, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, to act as moderator.

4. **Ms. Clark** (Chair, United Nations Development Group (UNDG) and Administrator, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)) said that the summit on the Millennium Development Goals set for September 2010 would offer an excellent opportunity to generate new political commitment and spur the collective action needed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The message of the MDG summit must be that the MDGs could be achieved. There was a range of tried and tested policies which could ensure progress if scaled up and adapted to national context.

5. The United Nations development system must be as well coordinated as possible to give comprehensive and quality support to MDG progress. The development impact of support by country teams could be maximized through the concentration of resources around priority goals.

6. Accelerating MDG achievement for programme countries was a top priority of the work of the United Nations Development Group. Numerous measures had been put in place to improve coherence and coordination across the system. At the heart of those efforts were the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs). In 2010, some 48 countries would develop new UNDAFs, and 28 countries would do so in 2011. That would provide opportunities to position the United Nations development system in support of country-led development efforts and MDG achievement.

7. Experience had repeatedly shown that national ownership and leadership were fundamental to accelerating and sustaining development progress. According to the Synthesis of the Resident Coordinator Annual Reports 2009, which would soon be published, 155 United Nations country teams had reported that their UNDAFs were fully aligned with national strategic priorities and had a strong focus on MDG achievement. For example, all of the development work of the United Nations under India's UNDAF was aimed at meeting the MDGs. The United Nations agencies there had signed a Joint Programme or Convergence with the Government of India and seven state governments to assist in placing 35 districts on track to achieve the MDGs. The programme was fully owned by the national and state governments, which had expressed appreciation for the approach.

8. Countries were also reporting that through joint programmes and common programme planning mechanisms, the United Nations development system was helping to accelerate the achievement of national and international development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. Coordination among the funds, programmes and specialized agencies was most advanced in the Delivering as One pilot countries and in those which had voluntarily adopted that

approach. For example, in the United Republic of Tanzania, which was a Delivering as One pilot country, the United Nations country team had effectively responded to the national priority and the MDG on maternal health and newborn mortality with a joint programme bringing together the special competencies of each contributing United Nations organization to support the Government's efforts. A decline in deaths had already been seen in one of the three provinces where the joint programme operated.

9. The "Delivering as One" approach had also been important in accelerating progress on Goal 3 (gender equality and the empowerment of women) in Albania, a pilot country, through efforts to increase the numbers of women in Parliament. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) was drawing on its long-standing relationships with women's groups and gender advocates within the Government of Albania to mobilize women and monitor the implementation of the 30 per cent quota for women candidates on party lists, while the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) was working through the system of youth parliaments in Albania to spread the message on the importance of women as candidates and voters. The percentage of women elected to the Parliament of Albania in 2009 had been twice as high as in previous elections, going from 7 per cent to 16.4 per cent.

10. Joint work on the MDGs had also been undertaken in Uruguay, another pilot country. UNIFEM, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) had worked together to foster cooperation among women parliamentarians from different parties to strengthen the gender focus of issues under consideration by Parliament. As a result, gender-responsive budgeting had been adopted by the Ministry of Finance.

11. The United Nations Development Group had produced thematic papers addressing seven of the MDGs, which provided an analysis of successful strategies, factors underpinning progress, critical gaps and a summary of key lessons. Its publication entitled *MDG Good Practices* contained over 200 examples of good practices of governments, United Nations organizations, non-governmental organizations, research institutes and the private sector. It had also revised the guidelines for country reporting on the MDGs. UNDP had prepared an international assessment of what would be required to achieve the MDGs by 2015, based on evidence from some 50 national MDG reports. The assessment identified common and underlying MDG success factors, highlighted constraints on progress and proposed an MDG Action Agenda to help drive progress towards their achievement.

12. A number of United Nations country teams were piloting an MDG acceleration framework designed to help Governments identify constraints on MDG progress and country-specific interventions to overcome them.

13. Challenges remained. Engagement in national development processes could be deepened; country teams' strategic planning capabilities could be built through UNDAFs; and the effectiveness of assistance could be increased through harmonization and simplification of business practices.

14. **Ms. Obaid** (Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)) said that the United Nations had increased its engagement with multiple partners in recent years. South-South cooperation was an important strategy for cooperation among developing countries, based on the premise that countries with common challenges and goals could share learning, expertise and mutual support. Triangular cooperation would advance implementation still further.

15. At the global level, the United Nations engaged in dialogue with all Member States concerning development priorities and advocated for financial and technical support for development.

16. At the regional level, the United Nations was bringing together resources to respond to country needs and to collaborate with regional organizations to make a difference at the country level. Regional organizations were increasingly active across the entire development spectrum. UNFPA activities were therefore focused on boosting regional capacity and establishing regional networks of knowledge to strengthen support to country programmes.

17. At the national level, Governments led and owned their development objectives and plans, set priorities and owned the achievement of their results. However, national ownership did not mean government ownership only. In work to achieve the MDGs,

engagement with civil society played a vital role in ensuring ownership of development by communities.

18. The commitment of UNFPA to partnership with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) was demonstrated by the programme Global Partners in Action: NGO Forum for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Development, which brought together over 400 NGO representatives and had resulted in a call for the accelerated implementation of the International Conference on Population and Development agenda.

19. The engagement of faith-based organizations which provided community-based services was an important area of partnership with civil society. Such organizations and religious leaders were important cultural agents of change. Youth were also important to the work of UNFPA. UNFPA had established various youth networks to facilitate work on issues that affected young people, from HIV to human rights. UNFPA had established advisory panels to listen to the voices of youth and civil society. Open dialogue and clarity of expectations were key to such partnerships.

20. The private sector played an increasingly important role in global development. It made business sense to support efforts to fight poverty in order to grow healthy markets. Corporate responsibility was seen by the United Nations and the private sector as an important venue for partnership. UNFPA collaboration with the business sector had included financial, programmatic and advocacy support. Its collaboration with international fashion retailer H&M on the Fashion against AIDS Campaign was providing needed financial support to youth awareness and education in the Middle East and Eastern Europe. The United Nations Global Compact had also emerged as a valuable voluntary network for companies to enact core values in the areas of human rights, labour standards, the environment and good governance.

21. However, the question of when the United Nations should disengage if the practices and values of its private partners were in question required further exploration, as did the question of how to reconcile public interest, for example, access to vital medicines, with the private interest of competition and profit.

22. The best known example of joint work among United Nations agencies was the "Delivering as One" initiative, but there were also many other examples of successful partnerships, such as the Secretary-General's UNiTE to End Violence against Women campaign.

23. Planning and delivering programmes jointly was motivated by the quest for greater cohesion, collaboration and enhanced effectiveness. The new UNDAF options allowed Governments greater national choice in developing country programmes and provided better alignment with national priorities, reduction of transaction costs and other benefits.

24. However, the most serious challenge was the question of accountability. Accountability systems were still agency-specific, despite the increase in joint contributions. Review of reporting systems and more innovative results chains and attributions would help to move away from that practice. The preponderance of non-core versus core funding was also problematic.

25. Partnership within the United Nations was crucial, but often developed slowly because the initial costs of such projects were high. In addition, not all development organizations operated at the country level, and where they did, operational models sometimes varied, rendering practical cooperation difficult. Harmonizing business practices was a must.

26. **Mr. Lake** (United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)) said that as efforts to achieve the MDGs intensified, progress was uneven, and inequities were deepening. The 49 least developed countries were the richest in children but the poorest in child survival, child development and child protection. Over 75 per cent of the 100 million primary school-aged children not in school lived in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, regions which also had the lowest rates of birth registration, the highest rates of stunting and the most limited access to basic health care, clean water and sanitation.

27. And while the number of children who died before their fifth birthday had greatly decreased, the relative mortality rate for children under 5 had in fact increased in the most disadvantaged places. A child born today in sub-Saharan Africa was 24 times more likely to die from a preventable cause before reaching the age of 5 than a child in an industrial nation, whereas in 1990, the likelihood had been 18 times greater.

28. During the greatest push to improve human development that the world had ever seen, the gap had continued to widen. The disparity between the survival

of rich and poor children had actually increased in most developing countries that had reduced their mortality rate for children under age 5.

29. The MDGs had not been intended to widen disparities. Strategies must be refocused on the forgotten children living at the bottom quintiles of society, in both developing and developed nations. Data analysis must change, for example, by disaggregating averages to uncover hidden disparities. Community-based delivery systems and trained community workers were invaluable in addressing some of the most difficult challenges, such as reducing under-nutrition and child mortality.

30. A project called the UNICEF Municipal Seal of Approval had achieved great success in reducing child mortality (Goal 4) in Brazil, working through community-based projects. Brazil was a leader in investing in innovative, community-based programmes to reduce disparities often concealed behind national averages.

31. Municipalities competed for the Seal of Approval award, and the community which made the greatest progress in improving children's lives — as measured by specific MDGs — was named the winner. Everyone in the community got involved, from political and civic leaders to families and young people. In the case of Brazil, the competition had led to a significant reduction in the numbers of underweight children under the age of 2. In communities participating in the Seal programme, the drop in infant mortality had been three times greater than in other parts of Brazil.

32. **Mr. Lopes da Silva** (Deputy Executive Director, World Food Programme (WFP)) said that the current climate of financial constraints and growing needs required the United Nations system to strive to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and assist the world's most vulnerable people as effectively as possible. It was critical for each fund and programme to adopt the very best and most modern business practices, thus supporting governments transparently and accountably, improving the impact of their work, and reducing transaction costs.

33. At the global level, the ongoing implementation, for instance, of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards, by 2014 at the latest, represented a fundamental change. The World Food Programme had been the first agency to adopt the new Standards in 2008 and it had made a significant difference, for they provided a much better picture of its financial performance, and in particular, the impact of food inventory levels. The use of common standards made each organization's books more transparent and enabled comparison among United Nations agencies and other public-sector entities. That vital information would in turn improve management systems and allow monitoring of efficiency.

34. WFP was also working on a range of measures to strengthen its internal control and accountability systems, not simply to ensure accurate financial statements or compliance with regulations and directives, but also to achieve strategic objectives in a cost-effective manner. WFP had put in place improved performance-management frameworks both for strategic results, or programme outcomes, and for management results. Though the two systems were in their early stages, they had significant potential to provide regular and better information to senior managers and the Executive Board. WFP was also in the process of instituting a risk-management framework that would provide information absolutely crucial to strengthening its control systems and formulating appropriate policies and operational approaches. The large WFP portfolio of operations in high-risk, complex environments would always result in residual risk, even after the appropriate approaches and controls had been put in place; the decision to remain engaged in such operations must be the shared responsibility of management, the government in question, the Executive Board and donors.

35. At the country level, there were several measures that were delivering better results and coordination in support of nationally led development programmes, especially in the "Delivering as One" pilot countries. Common information technology platforms held much potential for enhancing information-sharing between United Nations agencies and other development stakeholders, while reducing costs for technology procurement and support. WFP was working with others within the United Nations system to put in place reliable high-speed networks, and that work was most advanced in Mozambique and the United Republic of Tanzania, where the common information technology infrastructure and services were showing early successes.

36. A number of the "Delivering as One" pilot countries were also in the process of harmonizing and simplifying business practices in procurement, which

could in the long run reduce the cost per purchase (by almost 90 per cent in the case of Mozambique). The Rome-based agencies too had significantly expanded their joint procurement, resulting in markedly lower transaction costs.

37. Sometimes even small changes to business practices could have a significant impact, as in the case of the use by United Nations agencies of the harmonized approach to cash transfers to implementing partners (HACT), both governmental and non-governmental, approved by the General Assembly in 2008. It had reduced costs and lessened the burden on national partners, and it served to improve national aid management capacities — a major step forward in implementing the Rome Declaration on Harmonization and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. One hundred twenty countries were now introducing or fully applying the harmonized approach, while a growing number of United Nations specialized agencies had started to adopt it in the pilot countries.

38. The specialized agencies were fortunate to have several strong coordination bodies to help promote those types of approaches within the United Nations system. The High-level Committee on Management had been focusing on opportunities for improving coherence in key business practices, including human resources, safety and security of staff, financial and budgetary systems, and procurement. The Committee had launched a series of joint projects relating to procurement services, common treasury services and a financial statistics database, with the intention of improving efficiency across the United Nations system. UNDG was, of course, another important forum for actions focusing on country-level coordination, and it had recently undertaken a joint mission with the High-level Committee on Management to identify country-level bottlenecks in business practices where harmonization could ensure the operational effectiveness of the United Nations system on the ground.

39. There were a number of challenges facing the United Nations system that had to be addressed in order to reach the next level of efficiency and effectiveness in achieving the MDGs. If performance-management and outcomes measurement focused on individual agencies, there was the risk that the broader picture of the impact of the entire United Nations system on fulfilment of the Goals would be lost. Ways had to be found of measuring the overall contribution and performance of the United Nations system, which in turn should be instructive for improving programming. Of course, the diverse reporting burden imposed on agencies by donors, executive boards and governments did not facilitate that task.

40. Another major challenge that needed to be addressed quickly was the fact that the United Nations agencies were still applying quite different approaches to national staff and locally recruited personnel, who formed the backbone of country programmes. As agencies drew closer together, it was extremely important to harmonize those approaches to avoid causing staff to lose motivation and to ensure simple, focused and efficient systems. Fortunately, the High-level Committee on Management was currently working on that precise issue. Finally, making the shift to better business practices might require immediate investment by agencies to put in place necessary systems that would pay off in the coming years. Member States and governing bodies would have to be receptive to such investments.

41. Given the common desire to build a more hopeful future, the Millennium Development Goals brought the nations of the world together for what he believed was the most ambitious and the most important endeavour the world was undertaking at the moment. By implementing cutting-edge business practices, the impact of the United Nations system on that endeavour could be significantly enhanced.

42. **Mr. Charlier** (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that, since it would be prudent not to expect any further growth in non-core resources for the United Nations funds and programmes, following the substantial increase in such resources over the past decade, he would like to know where the executive heads of the funds and programmes saw room to make efficiency gains and cut administrative overheads. It would also be helpful to learn where most progress had been made in terms of harmonizing business practices at the country, regional and global level; what the priorities and main achievements were at each level; and what bottlenecks had been encountered.

43. The European Union would be interested to hear the views of the executive heads on the concept of "critical mass" that had emerged during the recent discussions on system-wide coherence, with regard to

the desirable level of core funding for each agency, fund and programme. With reference to the "Delivering as One" initiative, which should strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of the United Nations system in operational activities for development, he would like to know whether the management and accountability system, including the functional firewall, was working and to what extent it was understood. Furthermore, although evaluations in pilot countries had shown that "Delivering as One" promoted national leadership and ownership, its actual impact on the realization of long-term goals such as the MDGs had not been widely documented; he would therefore appreciate hearing the views of the executive heads on that matter. While additional resources were currently required to implement the initiative, he would be interested to know how the agencies, funds and programmes planned to ensure its long-term sustainability; in that regard, it seemed desirable that it should not be dependent on specific short-term funding.

44. Lastly, the European Union welcomed the emphasis placed by the Executive Director of UNICEF on inequity, which represented a major challenge to the achievement of the MDGs. Although the fight against inequity required complex strategies based on detailed, disaggregated data, it would be wrong to wait until such data had been collected, compiled and analysed before taking any action. He therefore asked what short-term measures could be taken to combat inequity before the full data were available.

45. **Ms. Lee** Sorie (Republic of Korea) said that, although it was encouraging to note that strengthened coordination between United Nations bodies was most advanced in the "Delivering as One" pilot countries, her delegation believed that there might be some duplication in the work of the various agencies, funds and programmes. She would be interested to know whether the Administrator of UNDP recognized duplication as a challenge within the United Nations system, and if so, how UNDG was working to tackle that issue.

46. **Mr. Rahman** (Bangladesh) said that while he recognized the good work being carried out in least developed countries by UNDP and UNFPA, he was surprised that their respective executive heads had not referred to that group of countries in their presentations. All the funds and programmes were mandated to maintain a particular focus on the least developed countries, which faced greater resource gaps and needs than ever. Realities on the ground were also changing fast; climate change, for example, had not been considered when the Millennium Declaration was first adopted but now posed a threat to all development gains. He therefore called on the four executive heads to further strengthen initiatives in countries that were becoming vulnerable to climate change and explain what steps they were taking in that regard.

47. Secondly, he would be grateful if the Deputy Executive Director of the World Food Programme could explain in what way the reporting burden imposed on agencies by their executive boards was constraining their activities rather than facilitating them.

48. **Ms. Cohen** (Australia), noting that the different reporting and accounting mechanisms in place for different agencies represented one of the challenges faced in evaluating system-wide or joint contributions to country-level results, asked what UNDG was doing to address that issue.

49. **Mr. Savostianov** (Russian Federation) said that the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals, to be held in September, would be important in mobilizing additional support for the United Nations development system. He enquired about other possible sources of development funding.

50. The adoption of General Assembly resolution 64/289 on system-wide coherence was of landmark importance in the work of the United Nations funds and programmes. Its adoption meant that discussion and decisions on increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations development system would be taking place in the context of the now-quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities. Preparations for that review should begin during the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

51. Assistance provided by the four agencies to address many pressing issues in the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States was to be commended. In their programmes and projects, those agencies should pay attention to regional integration within the Commonwealth of Independent States. Cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations such as the Eurasian Economic Community was important.

52. The Russian Federation was concluding withdrawal from the category of a recipient country. The offices of the United Nations funds and programmes in the Russian Federation would therefore be closed down, allowing for redirection of resources to needier countries. In that context, it should be possible to find a new format for bilateral cooperation, given the increasing involvement of the Russian Federation in international development. The Russian Federation had increased its official development assistance (ODA) from $100 million in 2005 to $800 million in 2009. His delegation would appreciate further information on promising forms of partnership between the Russian Federation and the United Nations funds and agencies.

53. **Mr. Barton** (United States of America) said that, as the United Nations system reflected on the progress made towards the MDGs since 2000 and evaluated the approaches it had taken, it would be interesting to know which of those formulas for success would be most difficult for the United Nations to integrate into its own DNA, and why. Secondly, while some countries such as Brazil had implemented national development plans and processes that were enabling them to make encouraging progress towards the MDGs, he would like to know what percentage of the least developed countries had been able to launch initiatives to that end, and whether the incentives that had worked in such countries as Brazil were proving effective across all MDGs. Thirdly, he asked what opportunities existed for lowering transaction costs and what partnerships seemed most valuable in that regard.

54. **Mr. Cumberbatch Miguen** (Observer for Cuba) expressed his delegation's deep concern at the executive heads' focus on a single development assistance model, despite the Council's recognition that there was no one-size-fits-all formula. In view of the major differences that existed between developing countries in terms of aid modalities, notwithstanding their common development challenges, he asked what measures the funds and programmes would take in order to continue operating in those countries that did not wish to adopt the model put forward over the last four years.

55. Like the European Union, his delegation would be interested to hear the views of the executive heads on the concept of "critical mass". As it attached great importance to the welfare of United Nations staff, his delegation would like to know how the reforms proposed by the High-level Committee on Management, would be reconciled with the reforms set out in to General Assembly resolution 63/250 on human resources management.

56. Lastly, his delegation believed that the resident coordinator system placed too much emphasis on a single agency, namely UNDP. He would therefore like to know what measures had been taken to democratize that system, since it was doubtful whether the functional firewall worked. In that connection, he would also appreciate more information on the extent to which the executive heads had been able to evaluate and take into account the opinions contained in the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the role of the special representatives of the Secretary-General and resident coordinators (JIU/REP/2009/9).

57. **Ms. Ajamay** (Norway) said that her delegation commended the United Nations operational agencies for their active involvement in achieving progress towards the MDGs. With regard to the "Delivering as One" initiative, it welcomed the outcome of the high-level tripartite conference held in Hanoi and the adoption of General Assembly resolution 64/289 on system-wide coherence. Her delegation supported calls for the United Nations agencies and their executive boards to intensify their efforts to deliver as one. Reforms at Headquarters level needed to be speeded up, especially in areas such as business practices, common reporting and human resources management, which remained a major challenge. Further empowerment of resident coordinators and effective functional firewalls were also critical. It would be helpful to know what the executive heads considered to be the main bottlenecks in taking forward the "Delivering as One" initiative.

58. While the United Nations agencies were under strong pressure to demonstrate and communicate results, the same was true of Governments and donors. Her delegation welcomed the progress that the United Nations had made; however, it encouraged the operational agencies to give a higher priority to their communication strategies, both individually and as a whole, since they still needed to better demonstrate the impact of their work.

59. With regard to the very important question of accountability, her delegation acknowledged the need for more innovative results chains and attribution of results. However, while the broader impact of the

United Nations system must be considered, it was also important for donor or programme country Governments to be able to identify which agencies delivered the best value for money.

60. Her delegation welcomed the developments highlighted in the reports currently before the Council regarding the funding of the United Nations. The Organization had never been better funded, and she noted, in particular, the increased financing for operational activities. However, the funding available was still far from sufficient to meet all the identified needs and fulfil the Organization's ambitions. In that regard, she encouraged the United Nations agencies and the Member States to intensify their efforts to broaden the Organization's funding base, since too much of its funding was dependent on too few donors.

61. **Ms. Cullen** (Ireland), referring to the two themes of achieving the MDGs and improving effectiveness through the "Delivering as One" reform initiative, asked whether the executive heads of the United Nations funds and programmes were confident that responsibility for addressing the two issues was equally shared or whether the recent high-level tripartite conference in Hanoi and the forthcoming High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals (the "Millennium Summit") had given cause to rethink the current United Nations operational environment. Secondly, she would like to know whether the high-level mission launched by the Chairs of UNDG and the High-level Committee on Management had been able to identify concrete system-wide measures to improve the harmonization of business practices, and how the executive heads would address its findings.

62. Thirdly, her delegation would be grateful if the Administrator of UNDP could elaborate on previous comments about the possible role of UNDP in bringing together smaller or non-resident agencies in a United Nations country team and "defragmentizing" United Nations development operations. Lastly, with regard to the tendency of "Delivering as One" pilot countries and donor Governments to comment unfavourably on the level of commitment to the initiative at the Headquarters level, about which the UNDP Administrator had previously expressed some concern, her delegation agreed that such a view was not particularly constructive. Progress should instead be made towards a more nuanced understanding of how Headquarters could better support country offices, and vice versa. In that regard, it would be helpful if the United Nations Executive Committee agencies could communicate where they saw bottlenecks, obstacles and problems.

63. **Mr. Ning'ang'a** (Malawi) said that his delegation welcomed the excellent results being achieved through the "Delivering as One" initiative. The participation of women in the Parliament of Malawi had already increased from 14 to 21.76 per cent under the auspices of the "One Fund" in that country; the Malawian Government now wanted to further increase female representation to 50 per cent in the forthcoming local government elections to be held in November. He called for support from the United Nations agencies, through the "Delivering as One" initiative, in achieving that goal.

64. **Mr. Leite** (Brazil) said that his delegation particularly welcomed the comments made by the Executive Director of UNICEF regarding the progress made by Brazil towards the achievement of the MDGs, particularly in the north-eastern region. Although much remained to be done, it was encouraging to know that his country was on the right track. He would like to ask the four panellists how they envisaged future cooperation between their agencies and the new United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women).

65. **Mr. Fluss** (Observer for Israel) said it was encouraging that the "Delivering as One" initiative was now in place. Noting that various actors were now working together on the programmes and strategies of partner countries, and highlighting the importance of including civil society and the private sector, he asked how new emerging or small donors could also be incorporated in the initiative.

66. Concerned at the gaps between countries in the achievement of the MDGs, his delegation noted with interest that, while a country such as Brazil could appear to be making good progress at the national level, more detailed analysis showed up local problems and challenges and gave clearer direction on how to address them. He would appreciate more information on how to move from the complexity of detailed analysis to the broader implementation of policies on the ground.

67. **Mr. Elshaar** (Egypt) said that he joined other delegations in asking how the funds and programmes viewed the concept of "critical mass" and, in particular,

how it could help to achieve a balance between core and non-core funding, which would affect the efficiency and effectiveness of United Nations operational activities for development.

68. **Ms. Clark** (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)) said that, given the funding environment, it was important to strive for efficiency gains in the budgets and spending of funds and programmes. Regarding the firewall, the management and accountability system was about to undergo an independent review and UNDP had taken a number of steps to ensure the integrity of how it managed the resident coordinator system. All agencies that participated in the country teams must be mutually accountable. On the issue of critical mass, in order for funds, programmes and agencies to be able to operate at the country level, core funding was critical because it supported the policies and operations that could be actually delivered.

69. Coordination would minimize the risk of duplication as could be seen from the Synthesis of the Resident Coordinator Annual Reports 2009, which described the huge efforts being made to coordinate country teams. However, there was some risk of duplication in the regional commissions and in country-focused activities. Regarding the level of support for the least developed countries, 60 per cent of the funding of UNDP under programme arrangements went to the least developed countries and about 85 per cent went to low-income countries overall. Country teams had received guidance from the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) regarding climate change related to disaster risk reduction, environmental sustainability and climate change issues and how to integrate them into United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs). Resident coordinators had been given a format for reporting progress on the UNDAFs but government structures were not always in place to permit single reports.

70. The most effective partnerships in place to lower transaction costs were related to the "Delivering as One" pilots and as the United Nations system increasingly engaged, in joint programming across agencies, there should be a greater positive impact on transaction costs. It was true that no one size fitted all, and as the representatives of funds and programmes had said, their effectiveness and the effectiveness of country teams depended on adaptation to national context and national leadership, as well as on national ownership. Enhanced coordination could lead to bottlenecks related to harmonization in business practices, but UNDG and the High-level Committee on Management would make practical suggestions to avoid them, drawing on the experiences of the mission to two pilot countries and a self-starter. In addition, best practices would be adopted for reporting on results.

71. **Ms. Obaid** (United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)) said that, in the area of accountability and attribution, there must be a clarification of what governments and agencies were responsible for achieving. Agencies with different assessment procedures found it difficult to report individually on efforts that, in many cases, were joint efforts. Audit systems must be adapted to new forms of implementation, especially where NGOs were executing programmes.

72. In the areas of women's health and censuses, it was important to balance visibility with the need to communicate real achievements.

73. Efficiency gains must concentrate not on the short and medium terms but on long-term decisions; any such gains must not result in cuts in programme budgets. However, making savings was difficult given the human resources problem at UNFPA where staff often migrated to UNDP and UNICEF or to international NGOs because they were employed at two levels lower than at other funds.

74. Acknowledging the importance of disaggregated data, she said that countries must receive financial support for the analysis of their census data so that they could disaggregate the information in order to identify spatial and other population groupings.

75. With regard to climate change, there must be investment in appropriate technologies to help women — the most resilient factor in communities — to deal with the challenges that arose, and population data must be available.

76. Governments were indeed offered more than one model for development assistance; in their UNDAFs, they could opt for the traditional or the new "Delivering as One" approach to the development of their programmes.

77. While coordinating closely with UN Women, UNFPA would concentrate on reproductive health, population and HIV prevention.

78. **Mr. Lake** (United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)) said that although the disaggregation of data was time-consuming, short- and long-run progress was possible. All country programmes were being reviewed in terms of equity to detect which could be accelerated and which were no longer useful. Offices in New York would be looking at strategies for the better-off countries, and at how to accelerate demonstration projects that could be taken to scale and implemented throughout those countries. In the least developed countries, high-impact and effective interventions would be accelerated, for example, to combat diarrhoea and pneumonia, the greatest killers of children. It must be noted that even those projects took time and therefore it was important to start as many efforts as possible. Reviews were being carried out country by country because it was true that there was no one size to fit all, and strategies must be built from the bottom up, taking into account national differences and Governments' own programmes.

79. Efficiencies could be obtained through systems. New platforms would permit the important move towards International Public Sector Accounting Standards and their integration with results-based programming. Information technology could be used to cut costs, especially by reducing non-essential travel. Although the implementation of such technologies in joint programming raised transaction costs in the short run, it was a wise long-term investment.

80. Core resources and their critical mass were important to enable flexibility in programmes. Moreover, when emergencies arose, regular resources could compensate for shortfalls.

81. More work was needed to adapt development efforts to climate change and longer-term Government development planning must account for it.

82. Although their transaction costs could in some cases be higher and despite their complicated nature, community-based programmes were vital and deserved more attention since they ensured progress towards achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

83. Noting that innovative sources of financing should be pursued to broaden the finance base, he said that multi-year contributions greatly assisted effective planning.

84. While "Delivering as One" was working well, the tension between maintaining momentum and analysing the strengths and weaknesses of pilots must be resolved.

85. **Mr. Lopes da Silva** (World Food Programme (WFP)) said that multiple requirements for reporting to national Governments in programme countries, to different donors with different requirements and to executive boards made it difficult to reduce transaction costs.

86. The concept of critical mass did not apply to WFP because of the nature of its funding.

87. The WFP portfolio definitely included adaptation to climate change, in both long-term activities undertaken jointly with other agencies and in its own recovery and humanitarian work. Its efforts to reduce food insecurity were directly related to resilience of communities to the effects of climate change.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.